

Short Report: Arthritis and Falls



Results from the 2010 Kansas BRFSS



Kansas Arthritis Program

Arthritis and Falls among Adults ages 45 Years and Older

Arthritis is a very common condition that contributes to falls¹.

By the numbers²

Prevalence of falls

- ◇ Just under 1 in 4 have fallen in the previous year
- ◇ 1 in 6 have fallen 3 times or more in the previous year

Falls causing injury among adults age 45 years and older with arthritis

- ◇ 1 in 11 falls among adults with arthritis caused an injury where they had to limit their activities for at least a day or to go see a doctor

Impact of arthritis on falls among adults age 45 years and older with arthritis

- ◇ Adults with arthritis who have severe joint pain are more likely to have fallen as compared to those without severe joint pain
- ◇ Adults with arthritis who are limited in their daily activities are more likely to have fallen as compared to those who are not limited in their daily activities

Relation between arthritis and falls

Arthritis and injury are interrelated, as arthritis is a risk factor for falls and fall-related injuries among older adults. Conversely, injury to the knee or hip joint or repeated overuse of joints can put a person at increased risk for osteoarthritis, the most common type of arthritis.

What can be done?

Individuals can ...

- ◇ Begin an appropriate program of exercise to improve flexibility, mobility, muscle strength, and balance.
- ◇ Carefully assess risks for falling, which may include medicines taken or hazards in the home.
- ◇ Tell their healthcare provider if they have fallen, especially this has happened more than once. The cause of a fall should always be investigated to avoid more falls in the future.

Health care providers can ...

- ◇ Assess balance and muscle strength of patients with arthritis.
- ◇ Alert patients on medications of possible side effects that may affect balance (i.e., dizziness).
- ◇ Recommend evidence-based physical activity programs, such as Arthritis Foundation Exercise Program or Walk with Ease, both of which have shown to improve balance and increase strength.

For more information:

Lisa Williams, Program Manager

Telephone: 785-296-2330

Email: lawilliams@kdheks.gov

Web: www.kdheks.gov

References:

1. http://www.healthinaging.org/agingintheknow/chapters_ch_trial.asp?ch=21

2. 2010 Kansas Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System. Bureau of Health Promotion, KDHE.